

**Connecticut Department of Transportation
Project No. 102-348
Rehabilitation of the Yankee Doodle Bridge
Bridge No. 00059
City of Norwalk
Public Informational Meeting**

**Monday, June 15, 2015, 7:00 p.m.
Room 128, Norwalk City Hall**

Present:

Timothy Fields, P.E. – Connecticut Department of Transportation
David Cutler, P.E. – Connecticut Department of Transportation
Jose Catalan, P.E. – Connecticut Department of Transportation
Theodore H. Nezames, P.E. – Connecticut Department of Transportation
Bob Nowak – Connecticut Department of Transportation
Richard Ezyk, P.E. – STV Inc.
Prashanth Kunigal Seetharama, P.E. – STV Inc.
Joelvito Villaluz – STV Inc.

Presentation:

A presentation was delivered by Mr. Jose Catalan from the Department, and Mr. Richard Ezyk of STV Inc.

One member from the City of Norwalk Department of Public Works, State Representative Fred Wilms, the East Norwalk Neighborhood Association, the Harbormaster, one individual from the local press, several individuals from the public, local businesses and organizations, STV Inc. and the Connecticut Department of Transportation personnel attended the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was to present the need for repairs to the Yankee Doodle Bridge, describe current conditions, discuss the major work items, describe the plan for maintenance and protection of traffic during construction, and solicit audience comments.

Public Comments and Questions:

- Michael Griffin, Harbormaster
Comment: Consideration must be given to the amount of water borne construction equipment that will be associated with this project, duration of different phases of construction and how long that equipment will remain in Norwalk Harbor causing disruption to the navigation channel. There is also the Walk Bridge Project in Norwalk starting in 2016 that will have a great deal of construction equipment shipped through this channel.

Devine Bros. Inc. (a concrete company) receives large barges of material almost weekly. There are social clubs, recreational clubs, and rowing clubs that should be presented with the drawings so that they can see the level of disruption caused by the two projects going on simultaneously.

Comment: Drain pipes from Yankee Doodle bridge drain directly into the river. There was a study conducted in early 2000 and the tests showed that there are petrochemicals from the superstructure that are carried through these drain pipes directly into the river causing contamination with no level of filtration. Thought has to be given as to what can be done to filter those chemicals before draining them into the river.

Comment: It would be great if the shell fish commission and Norwalk harbor management commission are included in the next meeting.

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- Fred Wilms, State Representative – 142nd District

Comment: It would be great if a future meeting for this project included people from recreation clubs, rowing clubs, etc.

Question: Does the project create any noise impact?

Answer: The noise impact will be mostly basic construction noise. Most of the work will be performed under the deck during normal working hours. Work performed on top of the deck such as median barrier and parapet upgrades and diamond grinding will be performed during off-peak hours. Most of the construction noise is usually caused by demolition and there is a limited scope for demolition in the project except for expansion joint demolition. Apart from that, only normal construction noise is expected. The project will be scheduled in such a way as to reduce noise during the night.

Question: How many workers are expected to be on site at one time?

Answer: This will depend on the means and methods of the contractor. It is very early at this point of the project, and it has to be determined by the contractor who wins the bid. Efforts are made to reduce the amount of disruption to traffic, and with such a limited work zone, we do not expect too many workers at one time.

- Mike Mushak, Bike/Walk Task Force

Question: Is it possible to make the walkway, which stretches from Lockwood Mathews Park to Exit 16, wider? There are some sign structures that extend into the walkway causing inconvenience. The walkway itself should be looked at as a part of this project.

Comment: The chain link fence next to the walkway is in poor shape and should be consider for replacement.

Comment: Agreed with the comments by Mr. Griffin on the storm water management. It would be great if a filtering system is created similar to the I-95 project along Connecticut Avenue where all the storm water is diverted to a large basin, filtered, and then discharged into the river. There is a state owned parking lot next to St. Ann Club which is currently being used as a dumping ground that can be a potential location for a retention basin.

Comment: Who selects the paint color? Care has to be taken in the selection of the paint color to improve the aesthetics of the bridge.

- Patsy Brescia, Homeowner

Question: Concerned about the off-ramp and on-ramp of Exit 15 which is in very bad shape due to poor maintenance. Is that a part of this project?

Answer: No, the project is just limited to the bridge structure itself.

Comment: The night noise issue has to be addressed. Use of jackhammers should not be allowed during nights.

Answer: There is not much use of jackhammer or demolition work involved in this project as the deck

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is in very good shape. If there is any demolition or work involving jack hammer, it will be limited during the night.

Question: What kind of measures will be taken in this project to reduce the speed of traffic as it approaches the bridge limits? Is it possible for trucks to have a different speed requirement than cars as it is a heavy accident prone area?

Answer: It is anticipated to reduce the speed limit through the use of signage and police presence, as in the case of the ongoing Moses Wheeler Bridge project.

- Question: Is sand blasting done during daytime or nighttime?

Answer: It will mostly be done during the day.

Comment: An exit from the sidewalk to a walkway underneath the bridge that connects East Norwalk to the park would be a great thing to be considered.

Answer: Permission has to be taken through the City. It is something which the City must decide and not up to the State.

- Debora Goldstein, Third Taxing District Commissioner

Comment: Installation of sound barriers is a major requirement to reduce the noise from I-95 traffic. It is a very important requirement to be considered as a part of this project. Use of temporary sound barriers during construction should also be considered to reduce construction noise.

Comment: Concerned about the schedule of this project. There are several other projects within the vicinity of Yankee Doodle Bridge like the Walk Bridge project, East Avenue widening project, and the bridge project over East Avenue at the East Norwalk train station are all scheduled in slightly different time frames and all these projects together would last for several years. These projects will create significant traffic diversions creating a mess on the local roads and for the residents. These projects could be scheduled around the same time frame so that the traffic diversion problem will not last for too long.

Answer: It is anticipated that this project will not be creating any traffic diversions and will not affect any local roads since all eight lanes of traffic are maintained throughout the duration of the project. This project will not have any effect on East Avenue traffic.

- Bill Solder, Homeowner

Questions: Will the lighting on the bridge be replaced or improved as the light poles have been clipped off and wires are duck taped?

Answer: Safety concerns with the lighting will be addressed. Lighting improvements are not within the scope of this project. The Department's electrical unit will be asked to review the existing lighting condition.

Question: Will the state properties be utilized for storage of equipment, maintenance supplies, construction products, etc?

Answer: Yes, they may be utilized.

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- Question: With the bridge being rated fair to poor condition, on a scale from 1 to 10, where does this bridge fall into the scale?

Answer: The bridge structure is rated every two years and the rating scale from the national bridge inventory is from 0 to 9 and the weakest component of this bridge is the superstructure which is rated to 4.

Question: By 2017, do you think that the rating will still remain the same?

Answer: Looking at the current condition of the bridge, the rating is unlikely to change significantly.

Question: Personally, I do not like this bridge because of the merging of the lanes. In the future, is there a possibility that this bridge will be changed?

Answer: It will be very expensive to change the cross section of bridge. There are no plans to change the properties or dimensions of this bridge. There will be a number of priorities in the State for bridge replacement however, this bridge does not fall into that priority so rehabilitation work is scheduled.

- Question: Do you monitor the cocoon from the outside to make sure it is safe?
Answer: The inside of the cocoon will have lower air pressure thus creating an environment that keeps paint debris particles inside the enclosure during the blast cleaning operation.
- Comment: Dark sky rated LED Lights, which have full cutoff, should be considered for installation on the median. They are energy efficient, safer (no glare) and will enhance the aesthetics of the bridge at night. It will be easier to consider this upgrade in this project than at some later time.
Answer: The requirement by state legislation for highway lighting is full cutoff lights. If there is a lighting upgrade then the state would do full cutoff lighting.
- Question: Upon completion of the bridge will there be any deck change?
Answer: There is just minor deck repair and patching. The deck is not going to be replaced.
- Question: The current ride on the bridge is very noisy. How is this issue handled?
Answer: The current ride on the bridge is noisy because of the transverse tining that was used at the time when the latex modified concrete overlay was placed on this bridge. Improving rideability is also included in this project. The Department will be diamond grinding the roadway surface. This technique will change the concrete overlay surface texture from transverse groves to longitudinal groves and will significantly reduce road noise.

Question: Will the diamond grinding raise any safety issues like causing slippery surface?

Answer: No, the latex modified concrete with diamond grinding has a superior quality over bituminous concrete in terms of pavement profile roughness and therefore is superior in handling hydroplaning concerns.

- Diane Cece, Homeowner
Question: Are the comments and questions being noted down? Will all this discussion, plans, and presentation be posted on the DOT website?
Answer: Yes, the minutes and presentation will be available on the DOT website.

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Question: Is there any chance that the contractor will use private properties for parking and equipment storage?

Answer: It may be used, but contractors prefer to use State property.

- Comment: This project will have a very big impact to traffic in Westport. In Westport, they are replacing Bridge No. 00062, which are two bridges before the Saugatuck River Bridge. Hopefully this impact will be considered in a future meeting.
- Question: Will there be any restriction placed on tractor trailers that come through that are overweight, over sized (width), or height? These aspects have to be taken into account as it will have a very big impact on local if these tractor trailers are diverted.
Answer: The need for restrictions is not expected since 11'-0" wide lanes are typical for this type of a construction project. The Department works very closely with their traffic unit and they are not aware of any cases where the lane width of 11'-0" has caused any impediment to transportation or has caused any issue with permits. This project is not constructable without temporarily reducing lane widths to 11'-0". Post-meeting, it was determined that overweight, oversized vehicles are not normally allowed on this portion of Interstate 95.
- Comment: From past experiences, we see that just posting speed limit signs on the side and on the lanes does not work effectively. We still see a lot of people speeding. Alternate measures should be considered.
- Comments: We have seen on some highways during construction operation they post variable-message signs; alerting the traffic to slow down from almost 5 miles away and they also place traffic cones as we approach the work zone and forces the driver to slow down. This should be considered as a method for slowing down traffic.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.